

Hartford "Firsts" and other interesting facts

- Charles Bulfinch (1763-1844), the first nationally recognized American architect, completed his first public building, the Old State House in 1796
- The Old State House is the oldest state house in America
- Hartford was the first city in the United States to erect a building designed for use as a YWCA-1867
- The first permanent and triumphal memorial arch in America is the "Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch" in Bushnell Park in Hartford. Construction started in 1884
- The Bulkeley Bridge is the largest stone arch bridge in the world – 1905
- Hartford's Commission on the City Plan was the first permanent public planning body in the United States – 1907
- Connecticut's first black congregation was located at the Talcott Street Congregational Church in Hartford. The church was originally called the African Religious Society. The church was built in 1826. They housed fugitive slaves until the end of the Civil War. The church also operated a public school and at the time was the only place black children could learn to read or write
- Laura Wheeler Waring, a black women, born in Hartford in 1887 is world renown portrait artist
- Aetna Life Insurance erected the world's largest colonial-style structure, 660 feet in length
- Phoenix Mutual Insurance Company's headquarters is the worlds first two sided building
- The Hartford Courant is the oldest continually published newspaper in America. First issue of "The Connecticut Courant" was issued October 29, 1764
- Jupiter Hammond, a Hartford resident and author of "The Kind Master and

the Dutiful Servant" was the first published American Black poet - 1783

- The first children's magazine was published in Hartford under the title "The Children's Magazine" in 1789
- In 1791 the first law book containing the federal laws of the country was published in Hartford
- Cryptography is the art or process of writing in or deciphering secret codes. The first cryptography book was published in Hartford in 1805
- In 1855 The Aetna Insurance Company initiated the work of educating the public in art by publishing the first chromo poster
- The oldest industrial in-house magazine in the world is "Protection" which began as the "Travelers Record" in March of 1865
- The first author to submit a typewritten manuscript to a publisher was Hartford resident "Mark Twain"
- The Wadsworth Atheneum was founded in 1842 by Daniel Wadsworth and is America's oldest public art museum
- The collection at Wadsworth Atheneum spans over 5000 years
- Wadsworth Atheneum has the largest art library in Connecticut
- The first photographs used for advertising purposes were group pictures of Civil War generals produced by the Travelers of Hartford in 1883
- In 1647, Alice Young was hung in Hartford in the charge of being a witch. She was the first person in the colonies so charged, convicted and put to death
- The first Home Missionary Society in America was organized in Hartford in 1798
- The first church services where prayers were in sign language of the deaf was conducted in Hartford in 1817
- In 1966 the first Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service in America was held on Constitution Plaza
- In 1819 Congress appropriated money for the first school for the deaf in America located in Hartford

- Domestic science and dietetics were first taught in a school in America by Catherine Beecher, the founder of the Hartford Female Seminary in 1815
- Trinity College was the first college in America to have open admissions, without regard to religious beliefs
- The first Teacher's Institute ever established was in Hartford in 1839
- Dr. Norman Morrison, who came to Hartford from Scotland, was the first man to separate the practice of medicine from pharmacy
- Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) was discovered in 1844 by Horace Wells in Hartford for use as an anesthetic in dentistry
- Alpheus and Truman Hanks made the first iron plow castings plow in America, in Hartford – 1820
- In 1854 Bushnell Park was the first park in the world to be voted for and to purchased by a city
- The first municipal rose garden in the United States is located in Hartford. The garden was laid out in 1903 in Elizabeth Park
- The first steam powered road wagon ever constructed was made in Hartford by Dr. Apollos Kinsley about 1797
- Professor Richtel of Hartford, flew the first dirigible in successful flight (2 hours) over Hartford on June 11, 1878
- The first pneumatic tire for an automobile was manufactured in Hartford
- The birth of the automobile industry in the United States took place in Hartford. The Pope Manufacturing Company using the best manufacturing methods then known, made Columbia Electric Automobiles. For many years Hartford was the center of the automobile industry
- The first time a President of the United States ever rode in an automobile was August 22, 1902, when President Theodore Roosevelt took a ride in Hartford
- Loaded with Royal Typewriters, the worlds first "air truck" left Hartford August 8, 1927 on a flight to Havana, Cuba. Havana had no airport so the cargo was delivered by parachute
- Samuel Colt of Hartford laid a submarine telegraph cable in 1843 from New

York to Coney Island and Fire Island, which was the first cable of this kind to be successfully laid and operated

- The first automatic coin telephone was patented by William Gray of Hartford in 1889
- The first broadcast from a moving aircraft was in 1926. The transmission was picked up on a receiver atop a roof in Hartford and rebroadcast by WTIC
- WDRC was the first FM station to begin broadcasting in the world in 1939
- The first watch made by machinery was the work of James and Henry Pitkin of Hartford in 1838.
- Veeder-Root of Hartford developed the first counter to register price and gallons for use on a gasoline pump in 1933
- Amelia Simmons wrote the first American cookbook and it was published in Hartford in 1796
- On January 8, 1975, Ella Grasso was sworn in as the first women governor (without inheriting the office from their husband) in the United States
- In 1883 the first intercollegiate lawn tennis match ever was held in Hartford
- The first woolen mill in America was built in Hartford in 1788 by Jeremiah Wadsworth
- In 1892, G.F. Heublein and Brothers of Hartford revolutionized the beverage industry with creation of the world's first bottled cocktails
- James Goodwin Batterson collected the first insurance premium in America in 1864
- In 1903 Travelers Insurance Company opened the first Insurance School to train its agents
- Travelers Insurance Company established the first corps of safety engineers
- Travelers Insurance Company introduced the first cash settlement life insurance policy "\$10,000 or your money back" in 1913
- The Travelers Insurance Company was the first ever to issue aircraft liability insurance with a full aviation program in 1919

- In 1943 Aetna Life Insurance Company became the first to insure atomic projects
- Travelers Insurance Company was the first insurance company to establish its own weather research center in 1956
- In 1958 Travelers Insurance Company was the first to offer women life insurance at a lower premium than men's, based upon longevity tables and accident statistics
- In Hartford in 1855, A.P. Pitkin recognized the danger of lead poisoning and introduced the first galvanized piping ever used in cities for the distribution of drinking water
- The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company, in 1866, was the first company in the world to inspect steam boilers and insure their owners against loss or damage arising from boiler explosions
- In Hartford on May 31, 1638, the Reverend Thomas Hooker delivered a memorable sermon that led to the "The Fundamental Orders" in 1639. This was Connecticut's first written Constitution. This Constitution was the first written Constitution in the world that created a government and it served as a prototype for the U.S. Constitution
- In 1826 Pliny Jewell conceived of making belting out of leather of sufficient quality and durability that they could be substituted for gears in transmitting water and steam power to machines
- Simultaneously with the Boston Electric Company, the Hartford Electric Company presented the enclosed carbon arc lamp for use in street lighting in 1893
- In 1896 the Hartford Electric Light Company was the first to use a storage battery in connection with a hydraulic electric generating plant, making it possible to supply peak load requirements from water power that otherwise would have gone to waste
- Hartford Electric Company is credited with being the first to install a 3-wire, 60 cycle rotary converter, to install feeder cables drawn in ducts and operating alternators successfully at different power plant in parallel, all in 1896
- The first aluminum conductor used commercially in a transmission conductor was used by the Hartford Electric Light Company in 1899

- The Hartford Electric Light Company was the first public utility in America to install a steam turbine driven generator in 1901
- In 1923 The Hartford Electric Light Company was the first in America to install an experimental mercury turbine
- Apollos Kinsley who lived in Hartford invented the following; a type caster for making type, a printing press in 3 models, 3 different steam engines, 2 ship pumps, 2 brick making machines, a pin making machine, a screw cutter, a new kind of oar, 3 tobacco cutting machines, a clock, a bullet caster, a machine for currying leather, all before 1801
- The first saw for cutting ivory was invented by John B. Collins of Hartford in 1822. The saw was used by the Cheney family at Ivoryton
- In 1829, Hudson of Hartford, introduced into his paper mill the first fourdrinier machine in the world. The machine marked the first of its kind to produce paper not made by hand or on a cylinder press. Finer grades of paper were now possible
- In 1830, Simon Fairman, developed a crude, hand operated chuck. He received a patent for his invention. His daughter married A.E. Cushman of Hartford, a pattern maker at Colt Fire Arms. Cushman eventually acquired his father-in-law's business and today Cushman Industries continues to produce chucks of the highest quality.
- The first American patent for friction matches was issued to Alonzo D. Phillips of Hartford in 1836
- The first electroplating applied to tableware was the work of the Rogers Brothers in Hartford in 1845
- The first commercially manufactured gyroscopes were made in Hartford in 1857. Used to demonstrate the earth's rotation, they continued to be used today as ship stabilizers and guidance systems
- The first brick machine to be installed in America was in Hartford in 1857
- In 1881, George J. Capewell of Hartford had perfected a machine that made horseshoe nails and received a patent for it and the international recognition for the best horse shoe nail in quality and finish
- In 1906 the first twisted-in-wire brush was invented by Alfred C. Fuller who established the Fuller Brush Company

- In 1951 Professor Vernon Kriable of Trinity College discovered the world's first one part anaerobic (hardening in the absence of air) adhesive and he revolutionized modern technology. The Loctite Company was formed to manufacture and market this product.
- The first battle cruiser was commissioned by the colonies of Hartford and New Haven for patrolling Long Island Sound in 1646
- In 1768, soldiers and officers from Hartford assembled to accompany Governor Pitkin and members of the General Assembly on Election Day. The escorts became carried away with festivities resulting in disgraceful conduct unbefitting the military. The loss to Hartford's pride resulted in a formal petition that on October 1, 1771 led to the establishment of the First Company of the Governor's Guard. It is the oldest military organization in the in the nation in continuous service
- The first meeting between General George Washington, Commander in Chief of the American Armies and the Comte de Rochambeau, Commander in Chief of the French Armies in America occurred on September 210, 1780 in Hartford at Meeting House Square (site of the Old State House)
- In 1836 Samuel Colt of Hartford invented and patented the first revolving cylinder for firearms
- The first, underwater torpedo, operated by electric current, was invented by Samuel Colt of Hartford in 1841
- Christopher Miner Spencer procured a patent for a repeating rifle in 1860
- In 1861, the first Union general to die in the Civil War was General Nathaniel Lyon, his body lay in state in the Old State House
- Richard Jordan Gatling invented the Gatling multiple firing gun, precursor of the machine gun. The first order by the U.s. Army for Gatling guns was given to the Colt Arms Manufactory of Hartford in 1866
- John M. Browning of Hartford invented the automatic pistol in 1896
- The first successful jump with a nylon parachute was accomplished June 6, 1942 at Hartford. Nylon chutes are still used by the military today
- The first license for offshore whaling was issued in Hartford in 1647
- The first genealogy of an American family was published in Hartford in

1771. The genealogy was that of Samuel Stebbins and his wife

- The first saddlery business in America was established in 1794 in Hartford by Norman Smith and is still in operation
- Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) patented the first self pasting scrapbook in 1875
- The first American to serve as President of an International Exposition was the Honorable Joseph Roswell Hawley in 1876
- Travelers Insurance Company was the first to use match books to advertise in 1898
- In 1923 the first public Christmas lighting display was put up in Hartford by the Georgia O. Simmons Co. The light bulbs were dip tinted and strung two feet apart from light pole to pole
- The oldest annual house and garden tour began in 1933 Sponsored by the Auxiliary of the Hartford Art School (now University of Hartford), it raised scholarship funds for needy students
- The Boy's & Girl's Club, which until 1990 was the called the Boy's Club, traces its origins to the Dashaway Club founder in Hartford in 1860.

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Greg Secord, Co-Founder

Hartford Preservation Alliance